

2007 ENGLAND
The West Country

Wednesday, April 18, 2007. There was a wreck on 285 so we had to use 400 to go to the airport. I have never seen such bad traffic, even in Atlanta. We finally got off 400 and went down Buford Highway to Spring Street. This was a little better but since the Braves were playing tonight, it too was almost gridlock. They predict Atlanta will have another two million people by 2020. I don't know where we are going to put their cars! It took almost twice as long as usual to get to Hartsfield.

By contrast there was no one at the airport, no line at all at check-in. I was happy to learn Elizabeth Cerulli had made the earlier flight. My flight is supposed to be full and since she travels on a pass she had come early to stand by. She gets her passes because her son is a Delta pilot. Since all the planes are running full it is getting harder and harder to use them. I am traveling on a special business class fare.

My seatmate was a Delta Million Miler having flown over three million miles with the airline. He travels the world for a technology company. He seems to live on airplanes. He also felt I should hear about all the times he had not been able to get his upgrades or free tickets. I was a little surprised since Delta goes out of their way to accommodate my requests.

After a poor dinner of dried up grouper I put on my mask and went to bed and never woke up once all night long.

Thursday, April 19. We got into London Gatwick on time and Elizabeth was there to welcome me. Out at the curb Ed Pengilly was waiting for us. His attractive granddaughter Megan had come to keep him company. She is eleven.

We drove to Slough, a bit over 45 miles, to the Pengilly's hospitable home. Joan was there to welcome us and after a short visit, while I fought to keep my eyes open, I adjourned to my room and slept for over three hours.

Joan produced a delicious dinner. A Shepherds Pie and soybeans. The last are green and somewhat similar to small lima beans. They are supposed to be wonderful for fiber.

After dinner we sat down to look at television and again the sleeping sickness got me. I was in bed by 10:00.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slough>

<http://www.nsr1.uiuc.edu/aboutsoy/soynutrition.html>

Friday, April 20. After breakfast I tried to be sociable, but it wasn't long before I had to go take a nap. I hope I wake up before the bridge game starts! Joan had a large meal of pork waiting for us at two. Then before we left for the game we had tea and sandwiches. I feel as if I have eaten a week of meals in two days! It is hard to refuse Joan, and I will say it is all delicious.

We drove to the British Airways Concorde Club. This is a wonderful recreational facility with many rooms and even cricket and soccer fields. Delta and British Air have been having a bridge rivalry for 30 years. Tonight there were only six and a half tables and only two Delta tables. Many people had cancelled at the last minute. Even the ones who came had a difficult time as all the flights were overbooked for four days. Thus the non-revs could not get on. Elizabeth had a center seat in coach when she came and considered herself lucky to have that.

This evening the Delta players were supposed to play with someone from British Airways. I sat down with Ed, hoping to have a revival of our successful game of two years ago. It was not to be, but the object of all this is to have a good time and that we did. It was fun to see friends from two years ago.

<http://www.baclubs.com/>

Saturday, April 21. I truly believe I have woken up! We drove to the Club about 10:00 am and settled in for team games. Curt and Pam Barbee made up the rest of our team. We had seven full tables and an interesting movement. The morning was run like a Board-a-Match with twelve hands. After some sandwiches and fruit we played again. This time we played five hands for five rounds. The Brits switched so that the morning's North-South became East-West. This allowed us to play everyone. I am not sure how they figured the results since the movement also meant we played the Delta players as well.

Elizabeth and I bid a slam that others didn't bid and on another hand I sacrificed a five spade contract and made it doubled. However it wasn't enough and we lost the traveling trophy "No Trumps" to the British.

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The club then provided supper of fish and chips or lasagna. Following that we came back to the Pengilly's for wine and two lovely gateaus (one was like a black forest cake) and cheese and crackers. Their yard was lovely with a rhododendron in bloom among other flowers. Their house is perfect for a party. However I was dismayed when the guests decided to explore. They peeped into my bedroom and found out what a slob I am with things scattered everywhere.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duplicate_bridge

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Forest_gateau

Sunday, April 22, 2007. Joan had a full English breakfast: scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon and toast. Just before noon we got in the car and headed for the West Country.

The view from the motorway was of rich farmland. Periodic bright yellow fields of rape stood out in the green landscape. Rapeseed is made into oil for soap and cooking. We also saw many herds of sheep and cattle.

We made a rest stop and it was more than we get at home. Not only could you buy fast food but there was also a Marks and Spencer store where a returning traveler could stock up on milk and so forth. I managed to find Connie's Extra Strong Tea, which I had promised her.

We made another brief stop and by four had arrived at the Weir Mill Farm in Willand, Devon. The farmhouse is lovely and at only 25 pounds per person per night very reasonably priced. There are only two guest rooms. Elizabeth's and my room is outfitted for a family of four so very spacious. From our window we have views of the fields filled with cattle busy producing the famous Devonshire cream.

The landlady produced tea and then we went outside to admire the garden. I walked down to see the cows and then back to the road. It was good to stretch my legs after so much sitting.

We had dinner at the Halfway House, so named because it is 160 miles from London and 160 miles from Land's End. I had a steak and kidney pie. I've had better.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapeseed>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marks_&_Spencer

http://www.informationbritain.co.uk/showPlace.cfm?Place_ID=65151

<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-devonshire-cream.htm>

Monday, April 23. It evidently rained last night. Everything was wrapped in mist. We drove past Exeter to the coastal town of Dawlish. Here a railroad follows the seacoast almost cutting the town off from the sea

However a brook runs through the center of Dawlish creating a delightful park. Populating it are the famous black swans, ducks, gulls and pigeons. You can walk right up to them since they have hopes you will feed them. We bought some small souvenirs and I tried a Devonshire Ice Cream cone, which was wonderful.

I was having trouble with the camera but did not know why.

Today is St George Day. He is the patron saint of Britain. Flags are flying in his honor.

We followed the sea road and tried to stop at a couple of towns but parking was impossible. It is off-season so we cannot imagine how one parks in season!

We drove into Plymouth, which has always been an important seaport. Our pilgrim fathers sailed in the Mayflower in 1620 to found the Plymouth Colony in the New World.

After a few bad turns and a somewhat long walk we came past the citadel to the place called the Hoe. There were commemorative statues and a magnificent red and white lighthouse known as Smeaton's Tower. It is 250 years old and once stood fourteen miles at sea marking the treacherous Eddystone Rocks.

I finally figured out why the camera wasn't working. I had neglected to put the memory stick back in after I downloaded pictures last night. I hope Elizabeth is getting pictures on her camera.

Finally we came to Polperro, a picturesque fishing village on the coast of Cornwall. We checked in to the Penryn House Hotel with its tight little parking lot. Our room is cozy but we have a full bathroom complete with tub! The Pengilly bathroom is very tiny.

After a drink in the bar, we set off in a slight drizzle to find a place for dinner and ended up at the Ship Pub. Joan felt it was somewhat shabby but my only objection was the loud soccer game on the telly. My chicken dish was fine.

http://www.dawlish.com/about_dawlish/

<http://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/StGeorge.htm>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth>
http://www.bbc.co.uk/devon/content/articles/2005/06/07/coast05walks_stage5_feature.shtml
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eddystone_Lighthouse
<http://www.polperro.org/>

Tuesday, April 24. We had a good breakfast and then went back to the pub to pick up the camera I left last night. We continued on down to the harbor. This tight little fishing harbor is very picturesque with narrow twisting streets and houses perched on the hillsides. There are only two directions in Polperro: up and down. The town fills a narrow ravine.

We drove to the Eden Project. This is very interesting as it is devoted to educating people about the environment and recycling. Situated in an old clay pit, tons of recycled dirt was brought in to become the basis for a botanical garden. Throughout the garden, recycled material has been used to create statuary. I admired the giant bee.

Two biomes were constructed. The humid tropic biome is the largest in the world. Inside are tropical plants. There were also exhibits to show what life in the tropics is like. There was an Indonesian house. There was also an exhibit to show how cassava is processed. One exhibit was devoted to bananas.

I could hear birds but did not see one and there were also supposed to be geckos and other small animals. I think our tropical greenhouse at the Atlanta Botanical Garden is prettier but there is no comparison to the varieties found here.

I became very warm and I did not climb the 62 steps up the waterfall. I also did not stop at the cool room to cool off as the others did.

We had a brief stop for some refreshments and then went into the smaller biome, which is devoted to the Mediterranean and similar climates around the world, such as California. This was much prettier with many flowers in bloom. In one exhibit they had many varieties of daffodils in vases. Each variety was indigenous to Cornwall.

I was becoming very tired and when the Pengillys and Elizabeth went on to the third exhibit dome, I caught the little train back up to the entrance and browsed the gift shop which features recycled things. It was interesting but the prices were so high I did not buy anything. The rate of exchange is now two dollars to the pound!

We came back to Polperro and had a drink before going to our room for a rest period.

We walked down around the harbor to the Two Pilchards restaurant. It is in a seventeenth century building and the nicest pub we have seen. I had some delicious mussels and Elizabeth and Ed had crab Mornay. Joan had Dover sole. We all pronounced our meals delicious.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eden_Project

Wednesday, April 25. We checked out after another full English breakfast and drove to nearby Looe. This is a bigger fishing port than Polperro with the entire quay given over to the fishing industry. Its history dates back to medieval times.

There is a lifeboat station here. The RNLI runs these stations to rescue boats in trouble on the sea. Ed had told us the Pengillys had come from Cornwall. So when we spotted Pengilly's Fishmongers it must have been a distant relative spelling the name with a rogue "e".

We drove on to Sidmouth and after a time found a car park. We went to the Willow Tree teahouse so we could have clotted cream and scones. It cost 4.5 pounds for two scones and one cup of tea. When we asked if we could have an extra cup and share we were told no! So I had a glass of water with my scone. A scone looks like a biscuit but has a heavier consistency. They are delightful with the clotted cream (which is as thick as butter) and jam. The clotted cream is a specialty of Cornwall and Devon.

We shopped a bit and then went to the lovely esplanade that runs along the sea and sat and listened to the surf.

Then it was back in the car again. We drove into Dorset, with lovely rolling countryside with pastures of sheep.

We stopped briefly at Bridport. The beach does not have an esplanade and I didn't want to walk very far on the pebbly shingle. Ed told us how as a teenager he had pedaled his bike to here on his way to points further west.

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We had a little trouble finding some Devonshire cream ice cream but at last had some delicious cones on the far side of the tight little fishing harbor.

Then we drove on to Weymouth. The Marina Hotel is right on the water and we have a wonderful view of the water from our room. However we are on the second floor.

Ed valiantly carried my suitcase up one flight up from the car park and two more long flights to our room. He must be wondering whatever possessed me to bring such a large bag. I wonder as well. I should have brought two smaller ones as Elizabeth did.

We went out again and walked a long way into the center of town. The colorful Jubilee clock was erected in honor of Queen Victoria's fiftieth anniversary. Nearby was a statue of King George the third. He often came here for holidays. On the far shore of the bay we could see Nothe fort that is a museum.

After looking several options over we finally chose the Swan Inn for dinner. I had a delicious lamb shank washed down with Pinot Grigio. By eating at pubs we have managed to keep the meal costs reasonable.

<http://www.looe.org>

<http://www.sidmouth.gov.uk/index.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clotted_cream

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scone_\(bread\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scone_(bread))

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridport>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weymouth>

<http://www.weymouth.gov.uk/main.asp?svid=494>

<http://www.fortressweymouth.co.uk/>

http://www.beerintheevening.com/pubs/s/94/9449/Swan_Inn/Weymouth

Thursday, April 26. Driving out of Weymouth, we detoured so that we could view the Osmington white horse carved into the chalk cliff. It was sculpted in 1808 and depicts George 111 on a horse. We could not stop to take a picture.

We next detoured to go to Stonehenge for Elizabeth had never seen it. We did not pay to go in but viewed this marvelous megalith structure from outside the fenced area. I cannot imagine how prehistory people managed to move the huge stones and construct this circular marvel. Joan and I both recall when there was no fence and you could wander among the stones. Now, like so many other wonders it must be walled off to preserve it.

I will always remember this wonderful trip. I feel I saw a part of England that I would not have found without the Pengilly's help. Their hospitality has been overwhelming.

We got back to the Pengilly's house about 4 and I repacked and prepared for the trip home. The Pengilly's daughter Sue, with husband Kevin and children Megan and Tom came by for a visit after supper.

For the first time this trip I could not sleep thinking of all the things I had to do tomorrow and the next day. I finally took a Tylenol pm about midnight.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osmington_White_Horse

<http://www.megalitismo.org/stonehenge.htm>

Friday April 27. We had an early breakfast and left for Gatwick before 7:30. The traffic wasn't too bad.

The problem came at check in. Since the last terrorist scare, Gatwick allows only one carryon per person. A lady's handbag counts as one. So does a computer. I had not brought a roll on since it must be placed in an overhead bin during the flight. Instead I was carrying three smaller bags: My purse, my computer and a small handbag. I was almost in tears after I shifted everything into the little bag and checked suitcase. I even had to put my medicines in the checked bag to make room for the computer. I forgot to get my clock out of my purse so I will be timeless. Hopefully there was nothing else I forgot.

After a wait I was taken through security and to Delta's Crown Room. I was completely stressed out.

Elizabeth and I had parted at check in for she needed to stand by. At least I have a reserved seat. I could not cope with that on top of everything else. She did make the flight and we were even

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able to sit together. I watched an entertaining movie "A League of Their Own" and slept crossing the Atlantic.

There was some sort of mix-up with the limousine. I think someone else's driver picked us up. After we assured the driver we did not want to go to Druid Hills Road as the GPS was telling us, he brought us home to Foxcroft.

<http://www.foxcroftcondo.com/>

Pictures of our trip can be viewed at www.meges.smugmug.com